

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CU-04 OMB-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 NIC-01

SAJ-01 SS-20 NSC-07 SP-03 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 DRC-01 /113 W

----- 021529

P R 031340Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL HAMBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2904

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION BERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

UNCLAS HAMBURG 0475

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GW

SUBJECT: HAMBURG MAY DAY CELEBRATION: CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND DGB
PRESIDENT VETTER AS GUEST SPEAKERS

1. SUMMARY: DURING THE MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN HAMBURG, FEDERAL CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND DGB PRESIDENT VETTER SPOKE BEFORE A MASS RALLY OF APPROXIMATELY 20,000 PERSONS. BOTH SPEAKERS ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF CODETERMINATION, WITH A MARKED DIFFERENCE, HOWEVER, IN THE TONE OF THEIR SPEECHES. WHEREAS BRANDT DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT'S MODEL AS THE BEST OBTAINABLE UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, VETTER EXPRESSED THE UNIONS' DISSATISFACTION WITH THAT MODEL AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO OBTAIN FULL PARITY. END SUMMARY.

2. GUEST SPEAKERS AT THE HAMBURG MAY DAY RALLY ORGANIZED BY THE DGB (GERMAN LABOR FEDERATION) IN THE OPEN AIR BEFORE THE LOCAL
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DGB HEADQUARTER WERE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT FOLLOWED

BY DGB NATIONAL PRESIDENT HEINZ-OSKAR VETTER. BOTH SPEAKERS CENTERED THEIR SPEECHES ON THE QUESTION OF "MITBESTIMMUNG" (CO-DETERMINATION), WITH BRANDT DEFENDING THE POLICY OF HIS COALITION GOVERNMENT AND WITH VETTER TAKING A MUCH MORE MILITANT LINE ON WHAT THE WORKERS EXPECT AND DEMAND IN THE WAY OF CO-DETERMINATION.

3. THE MOST INTERESTING PART OF BRANDT'S SPEECH, IN WHICH HE DEFENDED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN GENERAL, WAS BRANDT'S "APOLOGIA" FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED LAW ON CO-DETERMINATION. BRANDT WAS OBVIOUSLY DEFENSIVE BEFORE A CROWD MADE UP LARGELY OF WORKERS WHOSE NATIONAL UNION HAVE ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL AS NOT PROVIDING TRUE CO-DETERMINATION BUT LEAVING THE LAST WORD TO THE STOCKHOLDERS AND GIVING A PRIVILEGED POSITION TO "LEADING EMPLOYEES." BRANDT STRESSED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE FOR THE WORKERS THAN ANY PRECEDING GERMAN GOVERNMENT, THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL DOES NOT CLOSE THE DOOR ON THE POSSIBILITY OF PARITY CO-DETERMINATION BUT RATHER OPENS IT. ABOVE ALL BRANDT STRESSED THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT MODEL IS THE BEST PRESENTLY NOW POLITICALLY FEASIBLE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. BRANDT STATED THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WOULD NOT BECOME A STATE CONTROLLED BY THE UNIONS (GEWERKSCHAFTSSTAAT) NOR WOULD IT BE A STATE CONTROLLED BY THE GERMAN FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIES OR BY THE ENTREPRENEURS. BRANDT ATTACKED WITH EQUAL VIGOR FOES ON THE RIGHT AND ON THE LEFT.

3. DGB PRESIDENT VETTER, WHO FOLLOWED DIRECTLY AFTER BRANDT, WAS MUCH MORE MILITANT IN HIS SPEECH THAN BRANDT AND DID NOT MODERATE IT IN ANY SENSE IN DEFERENCE TO THE PRESENCE OF THE CHANCELLOR. VETTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNIONS WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL, CONSIDERING IT INADEQUATE. ACCORDING TO VETTER, THE WORKERS WILL NOT BE SATISFIED WITH LESS THAN COMPLETE PARITY ON THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND OPPOSE ANY PRIVILEGED PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF A "LEITENDE ANGESTELLTE" (LEADING EMPLOYEE) TO THE BOARD. VETTER STRONGLY ATTACKED THE OPPONENTS OF CO-DETERMINATION, SPEAKING OF AN "... UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF THE ENTREPRENEURS AND THE CONOMIC ASSOCIATIONS" WHICH ARE ATTEMPTING "IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALL POLITICAL REACTIONARIES" TO IMPEDE THE REFORMS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THE THREAT OF THE CDU/CSU TO BLOCK THE GOVERNMENT'S

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PROPOSED LAW ON CO-DETERMINATION THROUGH ITS MAJORITY POSITION IN THE BUNDES RAT REPRESENTS A "TOTAL NO". TWO CDU LEADERS WERE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BY NAME AS OPPONENTS OF CO-DETERMINATION: STOLTENBERG, MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN AND BIEDENKOPF, CDU GENERAL-SECRETARY.

4. VETTER COMPARED THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN OF THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION TOGETHER WITH ITS INDUSTRIAL ALLIES WITH THE TACTICS

USED TO BRING DOWN THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC, WHICH, HE SAID, HAD ALSO BEEN SLANDERED AS A UNION CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT. WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE WEIMAR COLLAPSE, SAID VETTER, SHOULD SERVE AS A WARNING.

5. AMONG THE CROWD WERE AN ESTIMATED 3,000 LEFTIST RADICALS, BELONGING TO THE MOAIST KPD/ML AND KOMMUNISTISCHER BUND. THEY CARRIED THEIR OWN RADICAL SLOGANS AND WERE WELL ORGANIZED FOR CHANTING AND WHISTLING. HOWEVER, THEY WERE NOT NUMEROUS ENOUGH TO GREATLY DISRUPT THE SPEAKERS, WHO HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF A LOUD-SPEAKER SYSTEM. NO OTHER DISTURBANCES TOOK PLACE, AS THE DGB EVIDENTLY HAD DECIDED IT WAS BEST TO IGNORE THESE GROUPS RATHER THAN TO TRY TO KEEP THEM AWAY. AT ONE POINT BRANDT DID RESPOND TO THEIR WHISTLING BY STATING THAT HE WOULD BET THAT MOST OF THOSE WHISTLING HAD NEVER BEEN INSIDE A FACTORY. IT WAS A TELLING POINT AND MANY IN THE CROWD APPLAUDED THIS REMARK.BROGAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, MAY DAY, SPEAKERS, SPEECHES, LABOR UNIONS, LABOR POLICY LINE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974HAMBUR00475
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740106-0964
From: HAMBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740577/aaaacqwt.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 OCT 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 OCT 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <03 JAN 2003 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAMBURG MAY DAY CELEBRATION: CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND DGB PRESIDENT VETTER AS GUEST SPEAKERS
TAGS: ELAB, GE, DGB, (BRANDT, WILLY), (VETTER, HEINZ-OSKAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005